

Food Standards Scotland (FSS): Food Fund Guidance for Local Authorities Advice on Specific Dietary Requirements

General advice

- We recommend including a short communication (e.g. a leaflet) with all boxes prepared for someone with a specific dietary request, indicating that whilst every effort has been made to ensure the box contents are appropriate, **all products and labels should be checked for suitability before being consumed.**

This document includes information on:

- Diabetic
- Religious requirements
- Vegetarian and Vegan diets
- Allergies and intolerances
- Nut allergies
- Lactose free
- Gluten Free

For further advice on special dietary requirements, contact your dietetic department.

Diabetic

Those with diabetes should follow a healthy balanced diet as per the Eatwell Guide or follow advice from their Healthcare Professional. For more specific advice for those with diabetes, please contact the dietetic department at your health board.

Religious requirements

We are unable to provide specific guidance on requirements for those following Kosher or Halal diets, as the needs and acceptance of foods varies widely. We recommend consulting with those requesting these diets about what is acceptable.

- General advice for Halal: no pork, bacon or other products derived from a pig; only consume meat that is certified Halal; and do not consume gelatine or other animal products that are not Halal. A vegetarian diet may be acceptable, if no Halal meat or products are available.
- General advice Kosher: no pork, bacon or other products derived from a pig, only consume meat and fish (with fins) that is certified Kosher; no shellfish; no eggs with bloodspots; no gelatine or other animal products that are not Kosher. Meat and dairy are not eaten at the same meal. A vegetarian diet may be acceptable where no Kosher meat is available.

Vegetarian

- Vegetarians do not consume meat or fish, but may include eggs and dairy produce. Not all will be strictly vegetarian e.g. some may choose to eat fish
- Suggested substitutes for meat and fish: lentils, chick peas, or other beans (not baked beans) e.g. butter beans, haricot beans, cannellini beans (for chick peas and beans, tinned is preferable to dried for ease of preparation)
- Baked beans may be included, but not as the only protein source
- Ensure cooking sauces and soups are suitable (i.e. contains no meat or fish)
- If it is possible to provide refrigerated products, meat alternatives such as such as tofu, bean curd (soya), Quorn or similar could be provided
- Vegetarians may not consume gelatine, which is in products such as jelly.

Vegan

- Vegans do not consume meat, fish or any animal products e.g. eggs, dairy, honey
- Check ingredients lists of all products to ensure they are suitable for vegans
- Suggested substitutes for meat and fish: lentils, chick peas, or other beans e.g. butter beans, haricot beans, cannellini beans (for chick peas and beans, tinned is preferable to dried for ease of preparation)
- Baked beans may be included, but not as the only protein source
- Ensure cooking sauces and soups are suitable for vegans (i.e. contains no meat, fish, milk, cream, cheese).
- Swap milk for a plant based alternative e.g. soya, almond, or oat milk
- If it is possible to provide refrigerated products, meat alternatives such as such as tofu, bean curd (soya) could be provided. **Check the label of specific products as some meat alternatives will not be suitable for vegans.**
- Vegans do not consume gelatine, which is in products such as jelly.
- The vegan society provides further information:
<https://www.vegansociety.com/>

Allergies and Intolerances.

- **All products provided in the boxes must have a label and full ingredients list**
- **All food labels should be checked to ensure that food items in the boxes can meet allergy requirements**
- Care should be taken to ensure that precautionary allergen labelling (statements such as 'may contain', 'manufactured in a premises that handles...') are considered when selecting food products for individuals with an allergy or intolerance

There are 14 main allergens which will be highlighted on the label:

- celery
 - cereals containing gluten - wheat (including spelt and Khorasan), rye, barley and oats
 - crustaceans e.g. prawns, crabs and lobsters
 - eggs
 - fish
 - lupin
 - milk
 - molluscs e.g. mussels and oysters
 - mustard
 - nuts - almond, hazelnut, walnut, cashew, pecan, Brazil, pistachio, macadamia/ Queensland
 - peanuts
 - sesame seeds
 - soya
 - sulphur dioxide and sulphites (where added and is above 10 mg/kg in the final product)
- Further advice can be sought from the FSS webpages on allergens:
 - <https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/food-safety/food-allergies>
 - <https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/business-and-industry/safety-and-regulation/food-allergies-1>
 - Link to guidance from Zero Waste Scotland on food redistribution, which includes some information on allergens:
 - https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/RES_Food%20Redistribution%20Guide_final.pdf

Nut Allergy

- People can have an allergy to treenuts or to peanuts. Although these sound similar, they are different allergies
- The labels of all foods should be checked for the presence of nuts- some products may not contain nuts but may be manufactured in a premises which do. **Care should be taken not to include these products in boxes supplied to nut allergy sufferers**
- Treenuts grow on trees; almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, pecan, Brazil, pistachio, macadamia (or Queensland) nuts. Tree nuts are found in many foods including breads, biscuits, crackers, desserts, nut butters, nut powders (often used in Asian curries), stir fry, ice cream, marzipan (almond paste), nut oils and sauces
- Peanuts (sometimes called groundnuts) are legumes and grow underground. Peanuts are often found in biscuits, cakes, curries, desserts, and sauces (such as satay sauce). They are also found in groundnut oil, peanut flour and peanut butter.

Lactose Free

- Lactose is a sugar naturally present in milk
- Individuals who follow a lactose free diet should not consume milk or products made from milk such as cheese, yogurts or custard
- Milk is one of the 14 major allergens; milk will be highlighted on the food label
Check the labels of all products to ensure they do not contain milk
- Lactose-free products e.g. lactose free milk have had the lactose removed to be safe for someone with a lactose intolerance to consume
- Lactose free products are **NOT suitable** for someone with a milk allergy, as they still contain the milk proteins which cause allergic reactions.

Gluten Free

- Gluten is a general name for the proteins found in wheat (wheatberries, durum, emmer, semolina, spelt, farina, farro, graham, KAMUT® khorasan wheat and einkorn), rye, barley and triticale (a cross between wheat and rye)
- For those with an intolerance to gluten or a cereal, they cannot consume products that have cereals containing gluten highlighted on the food label
- The label will name the specific cereals that contain the gluten e.g:
 - Wheat (all varieties including spelt, Khorasan)
 - Rye
 - Barley
 - Oats
- It is advisable to **check the labels of all products** to ensure they do not contain these ingredients
- There are gluten free versions of a number of products, including gluten free pasta, bread, breakfast cereal and biscuits
- The coeliac UK website provides further information:
<https://www.coeliac.org.uk/home/>